



MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF GAME & FISH

TO: All Commissioned Officers

FROM: Chris Chadwick

DATE: August 31, 2012

RE: Use of crossbows while hunting

As some of you are aware, the New Mexico State Game Commission met on August 23, 2012 and voted to amend portions of 19.31.10 NMAC, Hunting and Fishing Manner and Method. The amended portions pertain to the use of crossbows while hunting and created an allowance for their use by mobility impaired (MI) hunters and hunters who have been given a reasonable accommodation by the Director. The following is a summary of the changes and how this will affect your enforcement efforts.

New definition for Crossbow:

- “Crossbow” shall mean a device with a bow limb or band of flexible material that is attached horizontally to a stock and has a mechanism to hold the string in a cocked position. Sights or lights on crossbows shall not project light.
- This definition shall apply to hunting for all species and will become effective September 1, 2012.
- *Note: In most cases, magnifying scopes are now allowed on crossbows. The new definition also clarifies that sights may contain an internal lighting mechanism as long as it does not project light down range.*

Mobility Impaired Hunters/Reasonable Accommodation:

- Crossbows may be used to take or kill any game animal, furbearer or game bird by a licensed hunter in possession of a valid department MI card or in possession of a reasonable accommodation issued by the director, or as otherwise allowed by rule.

Use of Crossbows during Muzzleloader and “Any Legal Sporting Arm” type Hunts:

- All hunt codes denoted with a “1” or a “3” authorize the use of bows, crossbows and muzzle loading firearms, except that bows and crossbows shall not be allowed during restricted muzzle loading hunts.

- *Note: Crossbows with magnifying scopes are now allowed during a standard Muzzleloader and Any Legal Sporting Arm type hunt, but NOT during bow hunts, except as provided below.*

Use of Crossbows during bow hunts:

- It shall be unlawful to hunt with a crossbow that has a scope, telescopic sight or magnification device during any bow-only hunt for big game.
- *Note: The new rule makes an exception that allows only MI hunters and hunters who have been provided a reasonable accommodation to hunt with a crossbow during an archery season.*
- *The use of scopes, telescopic sights or a magnifying device is prohibited. Modern crossbows, however, are sold with a variety of sighting mechanisms. Some of them include a red-dot type system or contain internal “pins” that are selected based on the range to target. The shape and size of these sighting devices will vary depending on the manufacturer. Therefore, if you encounter a MI hunter using a crossbow during a bow hunt that contains a sighting device with a 1:1 magnification, then it may be considered legal.*